

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Three Soldiers

Pieter Bruegel the Elder (Netherlandish, ca. 1525–1569)

Date 1568

Medium Oil on oak panel

Dimensions 8 × 7 in. (20.3 × 17.8 cm)

Credit Line Purchased by The Frick Collection, 1965

Accession Number 1965.1.163

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 33, Sitting Room

Commentary Bruegel is best known for his large landscapes and town views populated by small, lively figures, often contemporary peasants, and illustrating biblical, allegorical, and folkloric subjects. In addition to the Frick example, only two other grisaille paintings by Bruegel are known, both on religious themes. This little panel, once in the collection of Charles I of England, represents a trio of Landsknechte, the mercenary foot soldiers whose picturesque costumes and swashbuckling airs provided popular images for printmakers in the sixteenth century. Bruegel may have executed the Frick grisaille as a model for such an engraving, although none is known, or simply as a cabinet piece. The attenuated grace of the figures in this painting may reflect currents in contemporary Italian art. Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996. Updated by the Curatorial Department in May 2016.

Collection History Charles I. About 1900 until the 1950s, private collection, England. Purchased by Mr. Marks, antiques dealer, c. 1960. Stephen Bangarth and others sale, June 26, 1964, Christie's, Lot 6, sold for £24,150 to Speelman. Agnew. Frick, 1965. Source: *Paintings in The Frick Collection: American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German. Volume I*. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.